

Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
www.planning.ri.gov



Work on the Statewide Planning Program's website this quarter included:

- posting of Transportation Improvement Plan Amendments.
- posting of public hearing notices
- electronic filing of committee agenda's and minutes with the secretary of state's office.
- posting of city/town approved affordable housing plans.
- posting of city and town amendments to their comprehensive plans.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Rivers Council, and Transportation Advisory Committee's calendar and agendas and public notices.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report.
- Conversion of the SPP website from Frontpage to Dreamweaver MX.

Graphics Room—Aerial Photos

Graphic assistance was provided to the Atrium Gallery. Technical assistance was provided to other agencies within DOA.

91 aerial photographs were loaned to cities, towns, other state government agencies and the private sector.

Staff also assisted with inquires regarding photographic and digital aerals.

For information on the Statewide Planning Program's website and graphics room—aerial photographs contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764, kimgo@lori.state.ri.us

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

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Quarterly Progress Report

KEVIN FLYNN HEADS PLANNING

Governor Carcieri has named Kevin M. Flynn as the new Associate Director for the Division of Planning. In his new role, Flynn will oversee the operations of Statewide Planning, Strategic Planning, Local Government Assistance and the new Office of Housing and Community Development.

Kevin comes to his new duties after serving as Director of Planning in Cranston for 20 years. In addition to his local experience, Kevin has been a long-time member of the State Planning Council and also a member of the Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission. Kevin is also active in the American Planning Association having served as Rhode Island Chapter president and has been adjunct faculty at URI's graduate school for Community Planning and Development.

Transportation Planning Program Recertified Until 2009

Under federal transportation regulations, metropolitan planning organizations (MPO's) must conduct a transportation planning process that is comprehensive, continuing and cooperative; and that complies with a myriad of federal regulations. The State Planning Council is Rhode Island's designated MPO, and the Statewide Planning Program serves as its staff. Every 3 years (and now every 4 years under newly authorized transportation legislation) the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration jointly audit the planning process. The Environmental Protection Agency and RI Department of Environmental Management, as regulatory agencies, also participate in the review.

The primary purpose of a certification review is to formalize the continuing oversight and day-to-day evaluation of the planning process. The certification review process ensures that the planning requirements are being satisfactorily implemented. In a broader sense, the certification review process is a valuable opportunity to provide advice and guidance for enhancing the planning process and improving the quality of transportation investment decisions.

This review consisted of four activities:

- Audit of documents (such as Long Range Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Air Quality Conformity Analyses, Unified Planning Work Program, etc.)
- Detailed questionnaire pertaining to planning activities, public outreach, tribal coordination, intergovernmental cooperation, progress since last review, etc.
- Public comment session at a meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee
- Day long session with federal and state agency staff, including RIDOT, RIPTA, and several other transportation stakeholders

Some topic areas that were reviewed include the following:

- Progress Since the 2002 Review
- MPO Representation, Coordination and Consultation
- Functional Classification, Travel Demand Forecasting, Transit Planning, Land Use, Corridor Planning
- Public Participation and Environmental Justice
- Air Quality Planning / Conformity
- Financial Planning

Under each of these categories, the review team can issue corrective actions, required actions, recommendations, and commendations. Statewide Planning's Recertification Report contained **no** corrective actions, one required action (which has already been implemented), twelve recommendations, and 4 commendations.

Required action:

- 1. A list of major projects and their implementation status should be included in the TIP to comply with 23 CFR 450.324(n). This should be included in the next update of the two-year TIP/STIP. *(Completed)*

Recommendations:

- 1. Environmental representation on the State Planning Council has already been accomplished through two new gubernatorial appointments.
- 2. RIPTA representation on the MPO, which requires legislative action, should be pursued at RIPTA's discretion.
- 3. RIPTA's should continue to plan for new service across state lines (for example to the MBTA station in South Attleboro, and to employee parking lots near Foxwoods) which will be facilitated by new guidance on federal motor carrier and public utility regulations.
- 4. Formalize a planning agreement with Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Council (Worcester MPO).
- 5. The Congestion Management Plan should include a process to evaluate the causes of congestion and a process to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies and actions. *(In progress)*
- 6. The public involvement process should be captured in a user friendly, public oriented brochure that could be used to help educate members of the public as to how they can become involved in the MPO's transportation planning process. *(In progress)*
- 7. In cooperation with RIPTA planning staff, explore opportunities for more direct involvement of transit users in RIPTA operations and planning activities. Involvement of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee, an EJ Task Force, Elderly and Disabled groups should be explored.
- 8. Include Environmental Justice analysis in the planning process at all levels, including the long range plan, and involve the EJ community in determining measures for analyzing the EJ impacts, benefit or burden, of transportation

projects.

- 9. Develop methods to involve members of the EJ community in determining appropriate criteria for measurement of EJ impacts. This could involve formation of an EJ Task Force or similar group to provide input into development of their program.
- 10. The procedures contained in State Planning Council Rule VIII result in an effective interagency process in analyzing transportation air quality conformity and should be submitted to EPA.
- 11. The Governor should delegate authority to approve the initial TIP and/or amendments to either the Director of Transportation or another cabinet official, such as the Director of Administration. A joint delegation to more than one official could also be considered. *(Initiated)*
- 12. The MPO should increase the representation of the Narragansett Indian Tribe in the transportation planning process, preferably through the appointment of a Tribal representative to the Transportation Advisory Committee.

Commendations:

- 1. Effective new procedure to amend the TIP
- 2. Participation in the State's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) program
- 3. Performance measures in the long range plan
- 4. Discussion of financial planning in the long range plan

The report includes the following:

"Rhode Island's process has received national recognition and the Federal team believes that recognition is well deserved and would like to recognize the efforts of the SPC, RIDOA, RIDOT, RIPTA, and RIDEM to provide the citizens of Rhode Island with comprehensive, balanced, and environmentally responsible plans and programs developed with real and constructive input from the public. The transportation products developed by the current planning process comply with the Federal rules, and the overall efforts of the State agencies appear to make the process work very well. Sustained efforts on the part of all the agencies involved will be required to maintain this process."

The certification remains in effect until 2009. The full report is posted at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/fhwari.pdf>

Economic Development

The 2005 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) *Annual Report* was completed this quarter, with the required review and approval by the state's CEDS Committee (State Planning Council and Technical Committee).

The *Annual Report* revealed that the program's performance in general is improving, with more projects building industrial clusters, forging partnerships, leveraging private investment, boosting wages and having a wider area of influence than ever before. The report noted new and more stringent scoring criteria, a more thorough review by the CEDS Subcommittee, and better communication with applicants and contacts within the Economic Development

Administration as likely reasons for these improvements.

The Economic Development Section participated actively in the revisions taking place to the *State Land Use Policies and Plan*, contributing economic data, helping address natural hazard mitigation, and offering editorial advice.

Review of EDC projects

2	proposals received this quarter
7	pending from last quarter
8	completed
1	pending

Intergovernmental Review

24	proposals received this quarter
2	pending from last quarter
26	completed

Land Use

Land Use Plan - Geographic Analysis & Future Land Use Map

Staff completed the geographic analysis for the new State Land Use Plan using the RIGIS system, particularly focused on the nearly 40% of the state which is undeveloped. The work included a land suitability analysis leading to identification of the best potential areas for both development and conservation. The project included the development of four future land use scenarios. The Technical Committee, upon advice of staff, recommended a composite scenario which was then further refined into a draft State Future Land Use Map. Over the past several months staff has made several presentations to the Technical Committee and State Planning Council to report project findings and received input on the draft map.

Other Activities

Staff has also been very involved in final reviews of the municipal affordable housing plans, including consultations with the communities.

Staff has assisted the committee for the State Strategic Housing Plan by sharing land use research and also preparing and distributing a survey to the municipalities to gather information on development since the 2000 census. The survey asked for information on single family and multi-family building permits as well as large scale projects.

Staff continues to assist the Rivers Council in and update to their State Guide Plan and helped to score a grant round for Trails grants. We have also assisted the Water Resources Board in the design of a build-out analysis.

RI Census



Complete Count Focus Group

The 2010 Census may seem a long way off, but it isn't. At the request of the U.S. Census Bureau, staff from Statewide Planning participated in the Complete Count Committee Focus Group in Philadelphia, PA. The purpose of the focus group is to obtain information to help plan and implement a new and innovative program for 2010. Complete Count Committees are the major vehicles for state governments and local communities to develop and implement targeted plans of action to increase awareness and motivate participation in the decennial census.

Discussions also focused on methods that might be employed to ensure a complete count, especially for the hard-to-enumerate populations and the growing number of immigrants – many living below the poverty radar. They often require additional efforts to be included in the final count. They use public services, and cities need federal assistance to help pay for them. The federal government allocates \$100 billion in programs based on Census Bureau figures. Community Development Block Grants, Section 8 vouchers, and the Title I program all rely on Census Data. It is imperative that every effort be made to ensure everyone is counted in 2010.

Comprehensive Plans

Thanks to a concerted effort by the Statewide Planning Program, Rhode Island Housing, and local officials, seventeen "Affordable Housing Plans" were approved by the State during the first quarter of FY 2006. The seventeen municipalities include Coventry, East Greenwich, Exeter, Glocester, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Johnston, Little Compton, Narragansett, North Kingstown, North Smithfield, Portsmouth, Scituate, Tiverton, Warren, West Greenwich, and Westerly. This leaves *only four* of the twenty-nine communities required to prepare an "Affordable Housing Plan" still in the State review process.

State approval was granted to amendment NP 05-1 to the North Providence Comprehensive Plan. The amendment was necessary to permit the proposed development of nine residential duplexes pending a corresponding zone change.

State approval was also granted to amendment WON 05-1 to the Woonsocket Comprehensive Plan. This was a contentious decision at the local level given the press coverage in The Woonsocket Call and The Valley Breeze as well as the letters, e-mails, and petitions submitted by local area residents. The amendment will (1) increase the Booth Pond Conservation Area by approximately 26 acres as a result of a land swap with the Trinity Village housing development; (2) designate

roughly 19 acres east of Park Square along the North Smithfield border as a Municipal Economic Development (MED) Zone; and (3) change the designation of about six acres of City-owned land to facilitate the expansion of the Diamond Hill Road WalMart store.

The Director of Administration issued a letter "suspending" the MED Zone component approval of WON 05-1 pending a re-examination of certain concerns raised by local officials and citizens.

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plans of Cumberland, Middletown, North Kingstown, Portsmouth, and Westerly are currently pending State review as are the Five-Year Updates of the Foster and Narragansett Comprehensive Plans.

The City of Woonsocket submitted a Request for Comprehensive Planning Grant retainage funds which was certified by Statewide Planning and forwarded to the Budget Office.

Senior Planner Paul Gonsalves was appointed as an alternate member to the RI Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.

Principal Planner Derry Riding attended the two-day "HousingWorksRI Retreat" designed to enhance the organization as a leader in ending RI's housing crisis and as a viable policy advocate for community outreach and public education.

Committee Actions

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in August and September. They approved the FFY 2006-2007 TIP. The council also approved the Annual Report on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for submission to the Economic Development Administration.

The Council also received a report on the Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning (See lead article, p.1). Staff also presented briefings on the update of the Land Use Policies and Plan. The Council was advised that their advisory committee on the update, the Technical Committee, had almost completed its work after a year-long process. Staff introduced the vision, goals and policies of the update as well as the alternative land use scenarios and the future land use map. The Council will continue to receive update briefings on this plan as the update is completed.

The Governor appointed his two environmental advocates to the State Planning Council. Mr. John Trevor of the RI Resource Recovery Corp and Mr. Michael Rauh from the Washington County Regional Planning Commission joined the Council in July.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met in August and September. They reviewed the draft Transportation Improvement Program and recommended it to the State Planning Council. The Committee also recommended acceptance of the Annual Report on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to the State Planning Council as well as an amendment to the FY 2006 Work Program to fund transportation corridor studies and other local planning capacity grants. The Technical Committee continued to provide feedback to the staff on the update of the Land Use Policies and Plan with specific discussions on the land use alternative development scenarios and the resulting future land use map – 2025.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The *Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)* met on September 22, 2005. The TAC took the following actions:

At its September meeting, the TAC approved the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment. This amendment would allocate additional funding for Corridor Planning consisting of detailed studies for future travel needs and setting priorities for projects. It would also allocate funding for Planning Challenge grants for planning studies in specific areas; the recipient of the grant would provide the state match.

Transportation

The TIP for federal fiscal years 2006-2007 was adopted by the State Planning Council on August 11, 2005 and subsequently approved by the federal agencies. This TIP concludes a year-long process that began last fall and included the following steps:

- Joint Enhancement and TIP workshops for municipal officials and the public
- Full project solicitation (137 proposals were received)
- Four public hearings to receive proposals
- Scoring and ranking of proposals by several subcommittees
- Development of financial projections and a draft TIP
- Air quality and environmental justice analyses
- Two more public hearings to review the draft TIP
- Review and approval by the Transportation Advisory Committee, Technical Committee, and State Planning Council.

The TIP continues the same overall programs and allocations as the previous TIP. Many projects have been completed and are no longer listed in the TIP. Several projects have moved from Study and Development into implementation, and new projects, submitted mostly by cities and towns, have replenished the Study and Development Program. This program now includes different categories: Highway, Bicycle / Pedestrian, Interstate, and Bridge.

The following projects are new to the TIP, and are included in the Study and Development Program, unless otherwise noted:

Northwest Region

- Cedar Swamp Road, Route 5, Smithfield
- Main Street, Scituate
- Routes 146/116 Ramps, Lincoln

Metro Region

- Improvements to the Route 6/10 Interchange, Providence
- Howard Avenue Roadway Improvements, Pastore Center, Cranston
- Route 1/37 Ramp Improvements, Warwick
- Church Street, West Warwick

East Bay Region

- Roger Williams Avenue, East Providence
- Left turn lanes, Route 114, Portsmouth & Middletown
- I-195/Taunton Avenue/Warren Avenue Interchange, East Providence

South County

- High Street Reconstruction, South Kingstown
- Route 138 Reconstruction, Richmond
- Canal Street/White Rock Road Reconstruction, Westerly

Rail

- Pawtucket/Central Falls Commuter Rail Station Study (*Planning Program*)
- West Bay Commuter Rail Study (Cranston, East Greenwich, and Kingston Station) (*Planning Program*)
- East Providence Wye Track (*Highway Program - for construction*)
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Bicycle / Pedestrian

- I-195 Pedestrian/ Bike Bridge, Providence
- Sakonnet River Bike Path (Tiverton) and Aquidneck Island Bike Path
- South County Bike Path, URI Connector, South Kingstown (*formerly part of a highway project*)
- Downtown Sidewalks, Providence
- Route 108 / Woodruff Street Sidewalks, Narragansett (*Bicycle Pedestrian Program for construction*)

Additionally, the following projects are new to the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program:

CMAQ

- Arterial Program, Warwick Avenue, Warwick
- Comparison of Alternative Fuels, Providence – Newport Ferry
- Traffic Signal Control, Broad Street and Broadway, Providence
- Islander Shuttle Train, Newport Dinner Train, Aquidneck Island
- Ferry Facility Improvements, RI Fast Ferry, Quonset Point

The draft TIP programs over half a billion dollars over two years, allocated to the following programs:

NOTE: The \$83 million Transit Program is in addition to the above FHWA program.

When the draft TIP was prepared, the federal funding act, known as TEA-21, had not yet been reauthorized, and was kept alive through a series of extensions. Now that SAFETELU has been authorized, the funding amounts have changed somewhat, and there are several earmarked projects within Rhode Island, most of which are already included in the TIP. TIP amendments are expected to reflect current funding amounts and add new projects into the TIP. The TIP is posted at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/spcapproved.pdf>.

